

REMARKS

The above-identified Office Action dated December 23, 2005, contained a final rejection of claims 1-24. Claim 33 was allowed. Claim 2 has been canceled and claims 1, 3, 13, and 21 have been amended to place the case in condition for allowance, or alternately in better form for consideration on appeal under 37 CFR 1.116. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the amendments to the claims be entered despite the finality of the present rejection.

The Office Action rejected claims 1, 4, 6, 7, and 9-12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yan et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,003,065) in view of Farros et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,717,686). The Office Action rejected claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yan in view of Farros as applied to claim 1 and further in view of Skibbie et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,910,128). The Office Action rejected claims 13 and 18-24 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Adolfsson (U.S. Patent No. 6,092,078) and further in view of Wood et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,732,162). The Office Action rejected claim 16 and 18-24 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Adolfsson in view of Wood et al. as applied to claim 13 and further in view of Farros et al. The Office Action rejected claim 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Adolfsson in view of Wood as applied to claim 13 and further in view of Skibbie et al.

The Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections based on the amendments to the claims and the arguments below.

In particular, the Applicants contend that combined references do not disclose, teach, or suggest all of the elements of the Applicants' claimed invention.

However, the Examiner stated that claim 33 was allowed and claims 2, 3, 8, 14, and 15 were allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims. Thus, although the Applicants contend that all of the claims are allowable before the present amendment, in an effort to expedite the prosecution of this case, the Applicants have added the allowable limitations of claim 2 to claim 1, added the allowable limitations of claim 8 to claim 13, and added the allowable limitations of claim 33 to claim 21. Hence, the Applicants submit that the independent claims are now allowable. Consequently, the Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) are moot.

With regard to the dependent claims, because they depend from the above-

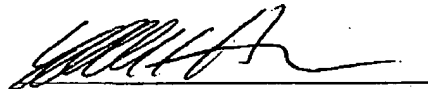
argued respective independent claims, and they contain additional limitations that are patentably distinguishable over the cited references, these claims are also considered to be patentable (MPEP § 2143.03).

As the foregoing amendments to the claims do not raise new issues, it is the Applicant's position that they are entitled to have the changes entered to place this case in condition for allowance, or alternately, in better condition for consideration on appeal under 37 CFR 1.116. It is, therefore, respectfully requested that the changes to the claims be entered despite the finality of the present rejection.

Thus, it is respectfully requested that the claims be allowed based on the amendments and arguments. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the outstanding rejection of the claims and to pass this application to issue. Additionally, in an effort to further the prosecution of the subject application, the Applicants kindly request the Examiner to telephone the Applicants' attorney at (818) 885-1575. Please note that all mail correspondence should continue to be directed to:

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Respectfully submitted,
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